



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0478MD-1 for Baltimore City Public Schools

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that is in direct correlation with district and state initiatives, and provides a clear and credible approach. The Baltimore City Schools (City Schools) has shown experience in its ability to increase student achievement as evidenced by the gains of 10.1 percentage points in reading and 15.2 percentage points in math on the Maryland State Assessments. Graduation rates increased 11.8 percentage points, with an increase of 12 points among African American students and 10.4 points among Hispanic students; and dropout rates have been cut from 9.4% in 2007 to 4.2% in 2011. City Schools seeks to build upon its growth in student achievement by the implementation of a two-pronged approach that utilizes personalized literacy instruction and college and career readiness efforts to engage students in rigorous learning experiences that promote mastery of Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The initiative known as the Personal Pathways Project is built on personalization that encompasses reforms in Preference, Place, Pace and Platform. This initiative will allow students and parents to have a greater role in determining what each student will need in order to be successful. Beginning in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, students will be given the opportunity to determine the pacing of coursework, the place in which they learn, the preference of reading and rigorous activities, and technology platform to facilitate their learning. All of these options provide students with the support to follow their academic interests. Through this grant, the applicant seeks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• develop content for Literacy Design Collaborative modules and Evidence-Based Explorations</li><li>• integrate content into a robust technology platform;</li><li>• provide professional development for educators;</li><li>• provide technology resources and training for users;</li><li>• provide college and career planning, data integration and wraparound services through community schools initiatives;</li><li>• and increase stakeholder engagement.</li></ul> <p>The strategies listed articulate a clear and credible approach to increasing student achievement and deepening student learning.</p> <p>Although the applicant sets forth a and coherent reform vision that is in direct correlation with district and state initiatives, the applicant fails to provided evidence that that illustrates that the schools' key stakeholders (principals, teachers and counselors) support the initiatives of the proposal. It is crucial to have these internal stakeholders buy-in to the reform vision to ensure the success of the project.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates an adequate approach to implementing its reform proposal that will support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation of that proposal. City Schools will invite all schools that serve grades 6-12 within the district to participate in the proposed initiative. There are 137 schools which serve up to 41,000 students in grades 6-12 that are eligible to participate in the proposed project. Due to the district's autonomous approach to district management, eligible schools will have the option to opt-in to the project. Based on past experience, the applicant anticipates 85% of the campuses will choose to participate. Following district opt- in guidelines, each school within the district will be provided a complete overview – including description, goals, anticipated outcomes and requirements - of the Personal Pathways program and what grant-supported activities are available to benefit their students. Schools that elect to participate must have the principal sign a MOU that outlines the expectations.</p> <p>The applicant has provided a list of eligible schools in Appendix A2.1. Due to the applicant's autonomous approach to management, the list of participating schools cannot be provided at this time. Schools have the option to "opt-in" to the proposed program.</p> <p>The applicant states that it will provide the U.S. Department of Education with a confirmed list of participating schools, serving a minimum of 25,001 students, within 100 days of notification of award. The anticipated percentage of low-income students is estimated at 81.96%. The population consists of 93.05% of non-white students. Approximately 1,200 teachers in grades 6-12, including ELA, science and social studies teachers will participate. Due to the opt-in approach that the LEA uses, it is unclear if the applicant will be able to fully implement the proposal</p>		

as outlined. There is no clear evidence to illustrate that schools and key internal stakeholders have been thoroughly involved in the proposal. Furthermore, it cannot be ascertained from the information provided if the applicant will be able to reach the number of participants that are required for the level of funding it is requesting. The applicant does not ensure the reviewer that enough schools will be willing to participate in the proposed program. For example, the applicant does not provide an interest survey or list of schools that have a strong interest in participating in the project as evidence of a high quality plan for buy-in for the proposal.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes a clear, high-quality plan which describes how the reform proposal will be scaled up. The applicant provides a thorough outline of strategies which will be implemented across the four-year award period. Roll out the project is aligned with a schedule, which gradually increases the levels of personalization and the departure from traditional instructional practice while maintaining focus on personalized literacy instruction and college and career readiness throughout the four phases of the project. For example, during the first year of the award, the applicant will develop the 8+Year Plans, implement the Literacy Design Collaborative and pilot a technology platform in 10 schools. In the following year, the applicant will scale up to implement Evidence Based Exploration projects based on Common Core State Standards, pilot technology platforms for 25 schools and integrate data systems with the technology platforms. By scaling up the project each year of the grant award, the applicant increases the likelihood of meaningful district wide reform and the ability to reach its goals.

The applicant provides only two activities to scale up the plan thus reducing the effectiveness of scale up. In addition, there is no mention of how the applicant plans to include middle and high schools that did not originally opt-in to the program to be added at a later date.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant outlines how the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by achievable annual goals.

All targets meet or exceed State and Elementary and Secondary Education Act metrics. The applicant outlines achievable goals for performance on summative assessments for the participating school district. The district illustrates a 1.1 percentage point gain each year to reach for a total gain of 4.4 percentage points for each subgroup to reach proficiency in reading and math on the Maryland State Assessments and 2 percentage points on the HSA Algebra and English exams. The applicant proposes to introduce a personalized learning model for 6th-12<sup>th</sup> grade literacy that will offer students flexibility; choice; and assistance in developing learning strategies that align with their abilities and interests, which will help prepare them for college and career. The proposed project specifically targets areas within City Schools in which growth and improvement are needed: secondary education, literacy, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates. However, the goals illustrated in the chart are achievable for each subgroup but not ambitious. The goals for proficiency in the summative assessments are not consistent with the goals listed in decreasing the achievement gaps within each subgroup.

By utilizing Personal Pathways, the applicant seeks to meet the listed annual goals, which have been established in alignment with School Board priorities. The applicant anticipates a 2 point percentage drop in each subgroup per year. The applicant does not explicitly address the lowest performance subgroups. By forecasting step increases across the board, the applicant does not significantly present a plan to reduce the achievement gap with the lowest performing students.

The applicant outlines attainable goals for increasing graduation rates. The high school graduation rates are to be increased by two percentage points each year. Based upon the current strategies and scale up strategies listed in the narrative, these goals are achievable. The applicant does not state how graduation rates will be calculated. It is uncertain whether the state or district will determine the percentages nor does the applicant state if graduation rates will include students who graduated post cohort. The graduation rate is not ambitious for each subgroup. For example, the FARM and Hispanic graduation rates dropped 2009-2010 cohorts to 2010-2011 and the applicant fails to demonstrate the ambitious goal of increasing graduation rate back to the 2009-2010 rate until the final grant year.

The applicant outlines attainable goals for increasing college enrollment. College enrollment is calculated as the ratio between college-enrolled students and their graduating cohort. As evidenced in a chart, goals of increase by 2 percentage points are shown in comparison of baseline data presented. The goals are not considered as ambitious since less than 60% of students are targeted to enroll in colleges thus increasing the concern that the applicant has not significantly addressed students' needs as it relates to college readiness.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant details information to demonstrate its efforts to advance student learning and achievement within the last four years. The applicant has made significant structural changes, such as shifting leadership and resource management to the school level, reorganizing district structures, and enhancing initiatives for family and community engagement which has led to some increases in student achievement.

The City Schools' graduation rates increased 11.8 percentage points, with an increase of 12 points. In addition, the applicant's Maryland State Assessment (MSA) proficiency levels are already on the rise in both reading and math; between 2007 and 2012, the number of students across grades 3-8 scoring Proficient or Advanced(P/A) has increased 10.1 percentage points in reading and 15.2 points in math. The graduation rates for all subgroups are inconsistent. As seen in the chart in the appendix, the Hispanic graduation dropped by 8.27 points between 2010 and 2011. The applicant does not address the decline in graduation rates for this subgroup. In addition, the applicant fails to demonstrate a consistent track record of success as it relates to college enrollment for low performing subgroups. For example, the enrollment rate for students with disabilities, Blacks and male subgroup illustrates that these populations do not maintain a significant growth pattern.

The applicant serves 137 eligible schools. Of the eligible schools there are ten identified School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools, two additional internal turnaround schools, and six feeder schools. The City Schools has formed a partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education's Breakthrough Center to achieve reforms in these schools. The Breakthrough Center is responsible for coordinating, brokering, and delivering support to high-need schools across the state of Maryland. In addition the Breakthrough Center has been active in providing professional development and coaching for teachers in the partnering schools. These strategies have led to schools increasing their level of student achievement. For example, Frederick Douglass High School, a Turnaround SIG school, has seen improvements in HSA Algebra, with an increase of 3.1 percentage points from 2010 to 2011 and saw a decrease in truancy, from 38% to 33.51%, and in suspensions, from 35 to 6. Schools receiving focused support through the state help implement ambitious and appropriate services to help raise achievement.

The applicant provides a clear record of success as it conveys student performance data to key stakeholders. City Schools' student performance data are available and easily accessible to students, educators and parents via two technology platforms: Data Link and Parent Portal. Data Link is used primarily to provide performance data to students and educators, while school and district websites and Parent Portal serve as online communication vehicles to parents. In addition, the applicant publishes a newsletter which highlights data and information to parents. The applicant has provided a clear explanation of the various avenues which are used to share information regarding student growth and it is clear how often these methods are accessed by teachers, parents and students. A chart is provided to illustrate the rapidly growing number of teacher and student logins in the Data Link site. The Parent Portal site usage has increased by 56% within a year which helps illustrate the parents' awareness of their children's academic habits and growth.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant clearly demonstrates a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments by publicly releasing school level expenditures for instruction, instructional support, and school administration. The applicant shares information through its district website which maintains information about district initiatives, policy, district and school budgets, and the budget-making process. Transcripts of meetings, calendars, invitations to open meetings, and videos are available to keep community members informed and involved. In addition, personnel expenditures are accessible on the district's website; the website for the local newspaper, <i>The Baltimore Sun</i>; and through the website hosted by the federal government's Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) initiative. The applicant's website posts the adopted budget for each school year, including proposed expenditures at the district level and estimated expenditures at the school level. The local newspaper publishes actual salaries of City Schools' educators through a public database which lists the name, job description, date of hire, base salary, supplemental pay, and total earnings for each district employee by year since 2008.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant clearly demonstrates evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory and regulatory requirements. The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) allows City Schools to implement a structure for personalized learning in many ways, including through an open definition of credit; release from seat time requirements for promotion and graduation; an option for local school districts to create unique and non-traditional standards-based curricular plans; alternatives to the traditional length of learning requirements; alternatives to traditional in-class learning, such as through online courses, work study, job training, and out-of classroom experiences; and a state requirement of UDL in local curriculum and instructional development. COMAR allows the applicant to successfully implement the personalized learning environment describe in this proposal.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	6
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated strong evidence of meaningful stakeholder support from various groups in the development of the proposal . Over a six week development period, the applicant reached out to stakeholders in a number of ways including through School-Based Focus Groups, Organizational Outreach, Public Listening Sessions, and Online Requests for Feedback. Three district schools hosted these sessions where teachers, parents, community members, students, principals, and School Support Network staff discussed project goals and discuss recommendations. In addition, sessions were held with internal stakeholder groups such the Executive Board of the Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU), the Parent Community Advisory Board (PCAB), the Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee, and the citywide Student Congress. The applicant has provided a chart which thoroughly illustrates the level of meaningful stakeholder engagement as evidenced by specific organizations providing letters of support within categories of various stakeholders. For example, Towson University will partner with the applicant to provide professional development as prescribed by the proposal. The applicant fails to provide clear evidence of meaningful support as it relates to key internal stakeholders such as principals, teachers and counselors. The application does not reference buy-in from these crucial stakeholders in its narrative nor does the applicant provide evidence of buy-in in the form of letters of support, MOUs or interest surveys.</p>		

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated a basic plan with goals to implement personalized learning environments. Persistent problems that negatively impact learning that the proposal seeks to address include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• low attendance and chronic absence,</li><li>• disciplinary problems and an unacceptably high dropout rate,</li><li>• disengaged students who do not see the relevance of school activities, and</li><li>• stalling student achievement scores.</li></ul> <p>The gaps and needs have provided the applicant with targeted goals for a personalize learning program. The Personalized Pathways logic model supplied in the appendix details the district's problems, needs, inputs, short-term outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and long term outcomes. For example, in order to address disengaged students the applicant will cater to the varying learning styles using preference, pace, place and platform to place more on-level and narrow the achievement gap. By providing only one goal and two activities, the applicant fails to outline a thorough plan to address the identified needs and gaps. The goals and activities listed fail to fully provide a means of addressing the needs outlined in this section.</p>		

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has documented a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The plan includes an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards. The applicant seeks to build upon its growth in student achievement by the implementation of a two-pronged approach that utilizes personalized literacy instruction and college and career readiness efforts to engage students in rigorous learning experiences that promote mastery of Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The initiative known as the Personal Pathways Project is built on personalization that encompasses reforms in Preference, Place, Pace and Platform. The applicant has outlined three goals which are accompanied by activities, rationale, deliverables, tentative timelines and the key personnel who are responsible for the tasks. Students in 6th to 12th grade will have an 8+ Year Plan extending into the first year of college that details the student's academic interests and goals, as well as qualitative and quantitative student data. The creation of the Plan will be facilitated by parents, teachers, counselors, and mentors, with students taking more control of their Plan as they progress towards12th grade. Students are involved in their goal setting which in turn engages and empowers them as learners. In addition, as students move forward through their personalized sequence of content and gain a greater understanding of their interests and career goals, the applicant will provide real-world learning experiences through various ways such as: mentoring, job shadowing opportunities, guest lecture series events, internships, apprenticeships and dual enrollment opportunities.</p> <p>Therefore, all students will be able to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interests. Although students will have ePortfolios and personalized pacing guides, it is not easily ascertained how often the data will be updated or when students will receive feedback on progress and personal growth</p> <p>The applicant does not address specific strategies for high need students. Furthermore, the applicant does not address the needs of all students by piloting the technology program in only 10 schools within the first year. It cannot be ascertained how personalized learning will be facilitated in the schools which are awaiting the integration of the technology platform of the proposal.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant outlines a strong plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The applicant has built a strategy for professional development and support that both utilizes pre-existing structures and creates new structures to ensure that each participating educator has the capacity to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies in their classrooms and schools.</p> <p>To help facilitate these structures of professional development, each participating school will identify a teacher leader who will serve as a resource for other teachers and a conduit of information and training from the district. All of the opportunities demonstrate the applicant's ability to effectively prepare teachers to personalize learning while increasing the fidelity of executing the district's plan to increase achievement. Although the applicant describes training that the counselors and teachers will receive, there is lack of evidence that the applicant plans to provide administrators with professional development to help drive the success of the proposed program.</p> <p>The applicant displays strong approach to using evaluation systems to help improve educator practice and effectiveness. The evaluation model used by the applicant will help improve teacher practice in two main ways: through observations with feedback based on the Instructional Framework; and through Student Learning Objectives that are used to measure student</p>		

growth. Built with support from State Race to the Top funding, these evaluations will identify teachers as Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, or Ineffective, which determines the number of AUs the teacher receives (and affects their advancement on the pay scale).

The applicant has developed a plan to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective teachers and principals. Each summer, teachers and students will have the opportunity to attend Summer Literacy Academies which grants teachers the opportunity to collaborate and learn while working together. This program will be open to all students entering grades 6-12, and will serve a maximum of 4,000 students.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided thorough details regarding the LEA practices, policies and rules. The applicant maintains a highly de-centralized district office, a result of a major initiative to shift authority and resources to the school-level. The majority of City Schools' district staff work primarily on-site with educators at their schools, to provide support to each school through the district's School Support Networks. The School Support Networks consist of an Executive Director of Principal Support, facilitator, Data Specialist, Academic Content Liaison for Literacy, Academic Content Liaison for Math, Academic Content Liaison for Science, Special Education Liaison, Student Support Liaison, Human Capital Specialist, Community Engagement Specialist and Facilities Manager. The pre-existing School Support Networks will be employed to support personalized learning in schools participating in the Personal Pathways project. This is beneficial to the success of the proposed program because the School Support Networks have a close relationship with the schools and know the needs of the school which will assist in providing the schools with greater support.</p> <p>Schools have the authority to make school-level personnel decisions and create unique staffing models, except for certain positions that are required by the district.</p> <p>The applicant provides schools with flexibility and autonomy in their organizational and budgetary decision-making processes. Using Fair Student Funding (FSF), which is the structure by which City Schools funds schools, allows schools to decide how to spend money in their students' best interests. The amount of money schools receive is directly tied to their students, calculated with funding models based on per pupil allocations and then receive additional dollars, according to weights for categories such as academic need, students with disabilities, and dropout prevention.</p> <p>Students are provided with opportunities to earn college credit along with their high school credit. The applicant states that resources and instructional practices are accessible to all students including ELL students and SWD, but fails to provide strong evidence as to how the high need groups will be helped.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant clearly outlines its practices, policies and rules that facilitate personalized learning. The applicant describes Local Education Agency and school infrastructure to help demonstrate it has a plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student the support and resources needed. Resources and instructional practices in the districts are cited to be adaptable and fully accessible to all stakeholders. Since 2010, the applicant has been outfitting its schools with upgraded technology to ensure that all students and educators have access to technology and the resources needed to use technology effectively in the classroom. All schools have internet access and every student and educator at participating schools will receive a wireless computing device that enables them to access educational content, tools, and learning resources. Teachers and families will be provided with technical support through Teacher Support Services.</p> <p>The applicant utilizes the following data systems which are interoperable: Oracle Human Resources, Student Management System (SMS), Professional Growth System, Oracle Performance Management System, Trapeze Transportation System, WinSNAP Food and Nutrition System, Data Link, and Parent Portal. The Oracle system contains human resources data regarding teachers, which is supplemented by Professional Growth System, tracking professional development courses and results and the evaluation system for collecting and reporting teacher performance.</p> <p>The budget data is the only system which is not interoperable. In addition, the applicant does not have the ability to export data at this time, but plans to develop a system to export data.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant outlines a strong plan for a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements. A third party evaluator will be selected to conduct a comprehensive evaluation to assess the impact of the project on the engagement and achievement of all students, their interest and aspirations for college, as well as the program's effect on classroom instruction and teacher effectiveness. The evaluation will consist of the following:

- implementation study, which will examine and provide immediate feedback on attainment of program-specific goals to foster continuous program improvement;
- efficiency study, which will determine ways for City Schools to improve operations, partnerships, and the use of tools and resources; and
- impact study, which will examine the outcomes of the initiative.

The Governing Board will be provided with quarterly reports to inform practice and to increase the impact of the program. The implementation study will evaluate whether the project is on schedule and within budget, and if management and governance functions are operating as intended. Quantitative data on implementation benchmarks and budget expenditures, and qualitative data from surveys of stakeholders, members of the Governing Board, and members of the Advisory Committee, will inform the evaluator of the extent to which implementation of project activities is on track to success and the level of satisfaction stakeholders are experiencing as they participate in the project. The applicant will be able to make data driven decisions regarding the program in a timely manner using information garnered from the external evaluator.

At the end of each quarter, the Personal Pathways Governing Board will receive a report from the evaluator detailing the extent to which the project is progressing toward meeting annual goals, the extent to which the project is being implemented with fidelity, and feedback from stakeholders. Data will be disaggregated by school and grade and for student goals by subgroup. The applicant has planned various ways to ensure that information is disseminated to all stakeholders. The district will share information about the Personal Pathways project and its emerging successes and challenges through Internet resources such as *Great Kids Up Close* and *Family Institute*, through Education Channel 77, and through Parent Portal.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant describes a strong system of communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The applicant has added various safeguards to ensure that communication remains in the forefront. To ensure internal communication and engagement, a Personal Pathways Project Director will be hired implementation of all aspects of the proposal, including coordinating and monitoring projects from within the Office of the Chief Academic Officer. Personal Pathways will be managed and implemented through a Governing Board at the district level that consists of key personnel, including the Chief Academic Officer, the Personal Pathways Project Director and Grant Manager, as well as each Project Sponsor and Project Manager. Internal stakeholder groups, such as principals, teachers, and students, will exchange information concerning the project with a member of the Governing Board who represents the group's interests during board activities. On-going communication with schools will occur through direct contact between board representatives and the School Support Networks.</p> <p>The applicant has planned clear initiatives targeted at improving communications to families and community members. A Personal Pathways Advisory Committee will advise the Governing Board on implementation and refinement of the project. The Advisory Committee will consist of a mix of internal and external stakeholders and will meet quarterly to share responses to the project from each stakeholder group, and to provide feedback to the Governing Board on project implementation and efficacy. Parents and families will be informed of the developments and achievements for their students through communication avenues such as <i>Great Kids Up Close</i>, Education Channel 77, Parent Portal, and <i>The Family Menu</i>. The applicant has developed numerous ways to ensure internal and external stakeholders are able to have ongoing communication and engagement throughout the program.</p>		
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(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant has provided required performance measures for all required groups as well as self-proposed performance measures. The applicant will track measures using the implementation study and data will be reviewed by the Governing Board, Advisory Committee and the School Support Network members. The School Indicator Reports be delivered on a quarterly basis and School Support Network staff work collaboratively to develop plans to respond to the applicant's needs based on the reports. The applicant provides a wide range of performance measures which include the social, emotional and academic aspects of student growth. It cannot be ascertained if the goals are ambitious or attainable because participating schools have not been chosen and key information is excluded from the charts.</p>		
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(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant provides a clear and highly effective approach to continuously improve its plan and evaluate its effectiveness of Rtt-D funded activities. A third-party, impartial evaluator not involved with implementation of the applicant's program will be selected to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the project thus providing a totally objective view. The impact study will be divided into two parts: a student impact study and an educator impact study. In addition, a separate efficiency study will be conducted to determine ways to more productively use time, staff, money, and other resources in order to improve results. The proposed evaluation will assess the impact of the project on student achievement (test scores, promotion, graduation, and college-going), engagement (survey results, attendance, number of internships, and college-level courses completed), and educator effectiveness (evaluation, observation, and survey results) thus providing a thorough evaluation of the program.</p>		
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F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant is requesting a grant award in the total amount of \$39,914,490 over the four year grant period. Based on the project design, the overall cost of the initiative will be \$67,385,490, of which \$27,471,000 will be provided in in-kind support. Overall costs appear reasonable to support services. The cost per student is approximately \$1140. Careful consideration has been given to the budget as evidenced by the allocation of funds for the infrastructure needs as well as support for technology and curriculum. The budget has been devised based on the ten components of the proposal and the rationale for investments and priorities is clearly articulated.. The applicant demonstrates that funds will be budgeted to provide the required services to eligible schools.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided an initial plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. During the grant period, the applicant will establish the expectation that schools accept responsibility for some of the costs of the Personal Pathways project. As a requirement for participating in this grant, each school will be required to contribute financially. Specifically, they will be required to purchase projectors for each participating classroom and contribute \$25 per student per year (out of their Fair Student Funding allotment) for technology costs. Potential funding streams considered will include in-kind contributions from District agencies and schools, private philanthropic sources, sections 6111 and 6112 of the ESEA, U.S. Department of Education research grants, and local LEA sources. Although the applicant has begun generating lists of potential funding streams, it is uncertain if the applicant will be able to maintain the appropriate funding level for the program at the end of the grant period. Other than the mandated fee per student and equipment purchases, the funding sources are not guaranteed for future sustainability.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presents a detailed plan on efforts to reduce chronic absence among 6-12<sup>th</sup> grade students in the targeted area. In a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional teacher, student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students. For example, the applicant's plan includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expanding Community Resource Schools to four high-need high schools, bringing the total number of secondary Community Resource Schools to 31, and staffing each with a site coordinator;</li><li>• Implementing an intensive mentoring program, with a 10:1 mentor to student ratio, to 100 high-need students in one of the new Community Resource Schools;</li><li>• Contracting with the FLBC to hire a Wraparound Coordinator to work with school counselors at all participating schools to ensure that additional government/FLBC services for which chronically absent students are eligible are integrated with their 8+Year Plan; and</li><li>• Training for Family and Community Engagement Specialists so that they may help schools replicate successful strategies for meeting the needs of chronically absent students among the schools they serve through the School Support Network.</li></ul> <p>The applicant has provided details as it relates to implementing an intensive mentoring program; integrating wraparound services with the 8+ Year Plans; scaling the model; integrating education and other services; and building the capacity of the staff.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant coherently and comprehensively addresses how will implement a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The plan includes an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards. The applicant seeks to build upon its growth in student achievement by the implementation of a two-pronged approach that utilizes personalized literacy instruction and college and career readiness efforts to engage students in rigorous learning experiences that promote mastery of Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Total	210	171
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0478MD-2 for Baltimore City Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant set forth a comprehensive reform vision. Aspects of professional development, training, infrastructure, student support, and program support were addressed. For example, the applicant had a comprehensive approach to training teacher leaders to provide ongoing professional development inside the schools. The applicant was innovative in using resources currently in the district, such as video exemplars of strong teaching and learning, to provide additional professional development. The applicant also provided a counselor education component because counselors are essential to supporting personalized learning for students in the applicant's plan, so they will be provided job-specific training.</p> <p>The reform vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• will accelerate student achievement by engaging students in their learning and giving students freedom of: preference, place, pace and platform.</li><li>• will deepen student learning through Common Core standards, internships, 8+ year plan (with support from counselors and other mentors), demonstrations of mastery of content, rather than seat time</li><li>• increase equity through personalized student support through the 8+ year plan, analysis of data, and matching students' needs with specific targeted assignments</li></ul> <p>The applicant's plan builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas. The applicant included an 8+ year plan to start the college/career discussion with 6th graders and carry them through one year beyond high school. The applicant provided a high-quality plan to increase student access to highly effective teachers by developing a teacher training program that had flexibility to engage teachers and reward them based on their own interests. The applicant proved that their teacher evaluation system was used to improve instruction, specifically with the Individual Development Plans that teachers create based on their evaluations.</p> <p>The some of the applicant's credibility was diminished. For example, the applicant did not demonstrate a track record of success in improving student learning, increasing graduation rates, and closing achievement gaps, which woud give credibility to their reform vision. The applicant's plan also lacked credibility due to a lack of evidence of support from schools, teachers, and administrators in reference to this plan addressing preference, place, pace and platform. Since schools, teachers, and administrators will be implementing the plan, lack of evidence of their support diminished the credibility of the reform vision. The credibility of the approach was also undermined by the applicant's roll out of the technology; technology was one of the main supports to personalize the learning, and the technology was phased in over four years, and therefore was not immediately available to all participating students to personalize learning.</p> <p>A1 received a mid-range score of 6 because the applicant articulated a comprehensive and coherent reform vision addressing the four core educational assurance areas; however, the reform vision lacked some credibility.</p>		



(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant made a compelling argument that the district has de-centralized and returned power back to schools. The applicant's plan included allowing the schools in the district to opt-in to the plan. The applicant created conditions, such as a \$25 per student fee (per year), to participate to ensure that schools have buy-in to participate.</p> <p>A list of schools will be provided by the applicant within 100 days of receiving notice of funding; however, the applicant predicts that 85%, or 117 schools will elect to participate. This number was based on another recent opt-in program regarding Common Core in the district; however, the applicant did not demonstrate that the two reforms will be compelling for schools in the same way. Even though the district predicted 117 participating schools, they did not provide evidence to support this number. The applicant did not provide a list of schools interested in the plan, nor did they provide evidence, in the way of letters or comments from teachers and administrators that demonstrate support of the reform. The applicant included a plan that was not fully developed--it contained only one activity--in order to get schools to opt-in to the reform. The lack of a developed plan to get schools to participate diminished the credibility of implementation.</p> <p>The applicant predicted the total number of participating students--broken down by low-income and high-need.</p> <p>In order to ensure effective implementation, the applicant included four phases of implementation, one phase per school year. The gradual implementation allowed the district to try aspects of the plan and adjust them before large-scale implementation.</p> <p>A2 received a high mid-range score of 7. The applicant made estimates about the predicted population that are based on another opt-in procedure in the district; however, no specific interest for this reform was demonstrated. The applicant demonstrated a realistic approach to implementation by breaking the plan into four phases that can be rolled out each year to ensure quality in the process.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan does not ensure access to the Personal Pathways Project--preference, place, pace and platform--for all schools and grade levels.The applicant provided a plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled-up, but the plan included only two activities. The applicant's current plan addressed students in grades 6-12 in schools that opt-in to the plan. The applicant created a plan with activities, rationale, deliverables, timeline and responsible parties to implement personalized instruction in grades 3-5 and to provide Universal Design for Learning professional development to teachers of PreK-5; however, this plan does not address all components of the Personal Pathways Project for PreK-5. The applicant also did not address how it would scale the plan to the schools with students in grades 6-12 who do not opt-in.</p> <p>One of the pieces of evidence that this plan may be translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change was the plan for rewarding teachers based on their involvement in leading others and collaborating with the principal to improve academic performance. The teachers will be given more pay according to know much leadership they take on; this leadership has the potential to help the district scale up the plan because more people will be trained and supportive of the process and goals.</p> <p>A3 received a mid-range score of 6. The applicant provided a plan for scaling up parts of the plan for more students; however, the applicant only included two activities for scaling up the plan. Without more activities it was difficult to see the full scale-up plan and how all students, at all schools and in all grades would be given access to all aspects of the Personal Pathways Project.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>All of the applicant's goals seemed achievable, but they were not ambitious. The increases were somewhat of a reach for the school but did not seem like a stretch over the period of four years.</p> <p>The applicant set a goal of improving performance on summative assessments by 5.5% in reading and 10% in math. The goals were the same for all subgroups, which would not be working toward closing achievement gaps.</p> <p>The applicant set a goal of decreasing achievement gaps by 10%, in many areas, but the goals were relative to the starting points and some categories were more or less based on the population and the starting gap. The goals for decreasing achievement gaps were not reflected in the goals for performance on summative assessments; these two tables were inconsistent.</p> <p>The applicant proposed to increase graduation rates by 10%. The graduation rate was another area that did not seem ambitious. One of the goals described in the competitive preference priority was decreasing absenteeism through community partnerships so that students are present at school and can engage in the personalized learning. If students are attending school and engaging in learning, as the plan suggests, it would seem that the graduation rate could increase more. For example, males currently have a graduation rate of 57.56%; after four years the goal is 67.56%. If they are attending and they are committed to the process through personalized learning, this goal was not ambitious. The applicant showed graduation rates that decreased in 2010-11 that were not brought up by the end of four years. One example of this was the Asian subgroup in 2009-10 had an 89.19% graduation rate. In 2010-11, their graduation rate dipped to 69.23%. The goal at the end of four years was 79.23%. The applicant did not provide a rationale explaining why their goal was lower than the rate in 2009-10.</p>		

The applicant's goals for college enrollment was to increase by 10% over four years. The college enrollment rate, overall was 46.7%; this would be increased to 56.7%. This goal seemed achievable, but not necessarily ambitious. The applicant provided evidence of support from institutes of higher education, which should lead to more ambitious goals in the area of college enrollment.

A4 received a mid-range score of 5. The goals seemed achievable, but they were inconsistent (achievement gaps) or not ambitious (graduation rates and college enrollment).

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	7
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant did not demonstrate a clear track record of success over the last four years. The applicant showed improved math and reading scores between 2007 and 2012, but the data for the years in between showed inconsistent growth; scores peaked in 2010, and then decreased in 2011 and 2012. The applicant also stated that graduation rates increased and drop out rates decreased between 2007 and 2011, but data was only provided for 2010 and 2011. The applicant showed an increase in AP test takers, but college enrollment rates actually declined between 2007 and 2011.</p> <p>The applicant leveraged the Breakthrough Center to achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools. Three schools' improvements under these efforts were described. The district show multi-faceted interventions in persistently low achieving schools to provide evidence of some successes in the three schools discussed.</p> <p>The applicant makes student performance data available to students, educators and parents in ways that will inform and improve participation, instruction and services. The applicant provided a chart that illustrated an increase in the usage of Data Link by teachers, students and leaders. The district has the resources to make data available in a meaningful way, and there was evidence to support an increase in usage of the data in a meaningful way. The applicant was mindful of the needs of those students without internet, and explained the resources available for students and parents without internet at home to access the data.</p> <p>B1 received a mid-range score of 7. The applicant did not demonstrate a clear track record of success in most of the areas mentioned above, but they demonstrated improved social, emotional and behavioral conditions through their work with outside partnerships and by improving truancy rates and chronic absences, specifically in the lowest-achieving schools. The applicant also demonstrated that data was available in a meaningful way.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>B2 received a 5 because the district explained, in-depth how it makes all levels of expenditures listed above available to the public. The district demonstrated a desire to be transparent by making the data available in "a user-friendly format with explanatory details for public accessibility." The district utilized: district website, the Baltimore Sun website, and the CRDC website to provide information to stakeholders.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrated successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements, including a release of seat time requirements from the state for students when they demonstrate mastery. The applicant also cited state approval for students to pursue alternatives to a traditional 4 years of high school study.</p> <p>The applicant explained how the goals of the current reform vision coincide with the state's plan, which was evidence that the applicant's plan will not be impeded by the state.</p> <p>B3 received a 10 because the applicant explained how the conditions and autonomy provided by the state will support the implementation of the plan.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	6
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant described multiple means over six weeks of the plan's development for stakeholders to provide input. The applicant provided compelling evidence that the issues from Listening Sessions and feedback solicited online led to revisions. The applicant provided evidence that online comments were solicited.</p> <p>Four themes from the stakeholders were listed and the the way they were addressed in the plan was described. A specific parent's comment was included about how her son was rebelling from learning, and the applicant explained how this feedback was used to help design the personalized learning environment that meets all students' needs, not just a specific</p>		

subset.  37 letters of support were included from a vast array of stakeholders. Some of the letters were form letters that were not unique to the sender, and some were personalized to illustrate support. Administrators and teachers in individual schools will carry out the implementation of the plan, yet their voices were not evident in the application.  B4 received a mid-range score of 6. The district engaged stakeholders in comment and made revisions to the plan based on stakeholder comments. Not all of the letters of support were original, and the voices of teachers and administrators was not evident.		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:  The applicant provided a basic plan, including activities, rationale, deliverables, timeline and parties responsible, for an analysis of current status. The applicant only included two activities in the plan: researching best practices and using data from current schools in reform.  The applicant provided an analysis of areas of need and how the plan will address those needs. It was not clear how the applicant arrived at those areas of need.  B5 received a mid-range score of 3. The applicant demonstrated a basic plan for analysis of the current status and identified needs and gaps that the plan will address.		

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:  The applicant provided a high-quality plan that included 9 activities. The activities are prioritized to move the district more to a model of personalized learning. The applicant did not prove all all students will be impacted by the plan.  For college and career-readiness, the applicant proposed the 8+ year plan, which starts with students in the 6th grade. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The 8+ year plan helps students to choose classes that match their goals and to understand that the work they are doing beginning in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade is key to their future.</li><li>• Trained counselors helps student monitor the 8+ year plan, which ensures that students are identifying and pursuing learning linked to college- and career-ready standards and measuring progress toward those goals. E-portfolios, which are part of the plan, are evidence of students monitoring progress.</li><li>• The options in preference, place, pace and platform provide access to students that is deep learning of academic interest.</li><li>• The Evidence-based Exploration (EBE) projects are evidence of students having the opportunity to master critical academic content and develop skills such as goal-setting, teamwork that are needed for real-world experiences. These EBE will also provide students will access to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepened student learning.</li></ul> It was not clear how students who are in 7th grade and above at the start of the plan will be brought into the process of creating and monitoring 8+ year plans. There also was not evidence to demonstrate that the counselors had enough access to students to effectively monitor their 8+ year plans. Teachers and parents are also mentioned as assisting with the monitoring of the 8+ year plans, but their roles were not detailed.  The technology platform was key to personalized learning; however, "all participating students" will not have access to the technology platform until 2015-16. Two schools will be brought on in April 2013, 10 schools in 2013-14, and 25 schools in 2014-15. In the absence of technology, the applicant did not provide a specific strategy to personalize the curriculum. There was evidence that teachers would be trained to provide best practices to all students (Universal Design for Learning), but the technology provided the major differentiation of curriculum.  Specific accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students were not discussed in-depth.  The applicant only briefly mentioned that students would be trained by teachers. The process for training students was not fully developed.  C1 received a mid-range score of 10. The applicant provided a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching for some students. The specific needs of high-needs students were not addressed in an in-depth way, and the training for students in this new approach to learning was not developed. Access to the trained counselors and the technology platform was not evident for "all participating students."		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	13
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:		

The applicant demonstrated a high level of professional development, which included: weekly professional cycles of learning (PCLs) sessions (collaborative teams), summer literacy academies, systemic professional development sessions, and opportunities for additional learning. The structure of the training was mandated in part, through district-wide professional development days, and individual opt-in, in part, where teachers could select to go learn about an instructional strategy and teach it to their faculty. The applicant will also provide video exemplars of teaching strategies that teachers can access for professional development.

The applicant described PCL collaborative teams as being data focused to improve instruction to meet students needs.

The applicant demonstrated that through teacher-created Individual Development Plans and through the setting of Student Learning Objectives, teachers and administrators utilize the feedback in the evaluation process to improve.

The applicant demonstrated that tools and training would be rolled out to faculty in phases. For example, the technology platform that will provide educators access to high-quality learning resources and process and tools to match student needs will not be rolled out until 2015-16.

The applicant described training for counselors, but the applicant was lacking a detailed approach to administrator training. Based on the opt-in process, school leaders were instrumental in guiding and adding value to the plan; however, minimal support and training, outside of what was also provided to teachers, was available to school leaders.

The applicant provided a credible high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals. This was evidenced by the ways teachers are meaningful engaged in the process as leaders and assistants to the principal in data analysis and working toward school improvement. It was also evidenced by the way that teachers are incentivized to participate in training. The commitment to professional development was evident throughout the application. Professional development will increase the capacity of teachers in all buildings; however, the applicant did not specifically address a plan for hard-to-staff schools.

C2 received a mid-range score of 13. The applicant addressed the teaching side of training and support, but resources for adapting instruction based on academic interests were not immediately available to teachers. An in-depth procedure for developing leaders was lacking. There was some overall evidence of improving access to effective teachers through professional development of teachers, but there was limited evidence for increasing the capacity of principals or improving the effectiveness of staffing in hard-to-staff schools.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrated that the district has School Support Networks to support schools on the reform initiative, rather than having the central office provide the support. The applicant argued that the support networks know schools better and can provide better support.</p> <p>The applicant proved sufficient autonomy for schools. Schools in the district are now responsible for 80% of their budgets. More evidence for the autonomy of individual schools is the opt-in process that the district has defined for this grant money.</p> <p>The district currently provides opportunities for students to progress based on mastery: dual credit, fourth year of high school may be waived. E-portfolios were included in this plan as one way to demonstrate mastery.</p> <p>The district stated that curriculum through the Universal Design for Learning would be adaptable and fully accessible; however, the learning resources available were not fully developed. The district stated that they comply with special education laws and that they provide support for ELL students, but adaptability and accessibility were not proven.</p> <p>D1 received mid high-range score of 13. The applicant provided a high-quality plan to facilitate personalized learning; the adaptability and accessibility needed to be more fully developed.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's plan will provide a computing device, regardless of income, to all students in 6-12 grade. The applicant also committed to providing wireless internet to schools. Currently, the applicant had laptop carts to provide students with increased access to technology and was working to improve bandwidth.</p> <p>The applicant provided evidence that staff were receiving technical education; additional technical support/training was part of this plan. The applicant addressed technical support for families, as well. Technical education for students was not explicitly described.</p> <p>The applicant provided a high-quality plan to make the data exportable and to ensure interoperability of all data systems.</p> <p>D2 received a 8. Currently data was not exportable and not all data systems were interoperable, but the applicant provided a plan to address these issues. The applicant did not describe explicit technical support for students.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presented a high-quality plan for rigorous continuous improvement. The plan included quarterly reports, which were evidence of timely and regular feedback. The applicant will hire an external evaluator, and there will be an Advisory Committee to steer the plan. The Advisory Committee will have a mix of stakeholders.</p> <p>The applicant created a plan to monitor progress toward the grant goals that included: implementation study, efficiency study, and impact study. This process was strong because it was designed to examine and provide feedback on different angles of the plan. The studies frequent and include qualitative and quantitative data.</p> <p>The applicant provided performance measures to assess progress toward the goals of the grant. The performance measures were strong in that they addressed the whole student, not just the student's performance on summative assessments. However, since the schools were yet to be identified, it was difficult to determine if the performance measures were ambitious yet achievable.</p> <p>The applicant cited many ways they will communicate with stakeholders about the progress of the plan.</p> <p>E1 received a 13. The applicant presented evidence that the plan will be reviewed regularly and adjustments will be made. There were some weaknesses in the performance assessments.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>E2 received a 5. The applicant's ability to communicate about the grant was evident by the process used to communicate with stakeholders throughout the creation of the plan. The applicant provided evidence of an online place to comment on the plan. The applicant also provided evidence of feedback from Listening Sessions. The most compelling piece of this evidence was that the applicant took the stakeholders' comments and used them to revise the plan. This evidence coupled with the strategies that the applicant listed throughout the life of the grant (i.e. more listening sessions, surveys, newsletters, websites) prove that there will be both internal and external communication regarding the plan and the progress toward goals.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant included 17 performance measures. In section A4, it was noted that some of the goals did not seem ambitious; for example, raising college enrollment by 10% over a four year period. However, these 17 performance measures, taken as a whole, addressed the whole student. One of the performance measures was "the number of students participating in paid and unpaid work-based learning experiences." Another one was "The percentage of chronically absent students (who miss more than 10% of school)." These performance measures were addressing many aspects that make up a student in order to improve learning overall.</p> <p>Performance measures and targets were based on the overall population, as the participating schools have not yet been determined. Since the performance measures are not school-specific, it was difficult to determine if they were ambitious yet achievable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The applicant provided rationales for all of the performance measures they selected; the rationales tied into their overall picture of student success.</li><li>• The measures will provide rigorous, timely, formative feedback.</li><li>• The applicant presented a plan to review and improve measures over time.</li></ul> <p>E3 received a 4. The applicant provided performance measures that addressed the whole student, not just performance on summative assessments. The performance measures are theoretical because the participating schools and students have not yet been identified.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant committed to designing an efficiency study to evaluate effectiveness of RTTD funds—professional development, employ technology, etc. The applicant will use the Building a Teaching Effectiveness Network (BTEN) project to help analyze efficiencies.</p> <p>E4 received a score of 5. Through the BTEN, he applicant demonstrated past effectiveness evaluating projects and a clear plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the RTTT funds.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided a clear rationale for all budget items; each item was explained and the need justified in the plan. The budget narrative was broken down into 10 projects; the goals and the funds needed for each project were identified.</p> <p>The applicant identified other funds that will support the project including, in-kind support from the Carnegie Foundation and City Schools.</p> <p>The budget was reasonable and sufficient. It included elements such as technology, technology support and technology infrastructure. The applicant provided a thorough budget that addressed all costs: curriculum development, curriculum support, technology to implement curriculum, etc.</p> <p>The funds were well described and they were labeled one-time or ongoing investments.</p> <p>F1 received a 10 because the budge was reasonable and sufficient and provided strong rationales for each component. The budget was comprehensive, tied to the applicant's goals, and it clearly delineated why the funds were needed for the plan, where they would come from, and whether or not it was an ongoing cost.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presented a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals. The potential for sustainability was somewhat evident in the partnerships, such as the Carnegie Foundation, that the district already leverages. Also, the district was requiring each school to contribute \$25/per student to participate to demonstrate buy-in from them.</p> <p>F2 received a high mid-range score of 7. The applicant had a plan, and they are currently leveraging other resources; the plan had credibility. However, there was not a direct commitment of continued financial support from State and local government leaders. The applicant thought through a list of potential sources of funds, but that does not guarantee a commitment to fund.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided a description of a current partnership with the Family League that would be expanded. The applicant presented a strong rationale for expanding the partnership: improving students' outside situations so that they are absent less and have access to the personalized plan for education.</p> <p>The applicant identified 8 population-level desired results. The results addressed such issues as suspensions and chronic absenteeism.</p> <p>The school and the Family League would work together to identify students that need support and support those students and families on eliminating barriers to attendance. The applicant demonstrated some ability to scale the project by empowering teachers and parents to work on behalf of students, but the proposed Community Resources School partnerships are costly, and there was not an in-depth plan to scale this due to the financial barrier.</p> <p>The applicant demonstrated that this partnership would help reduce absenteeism, which would in turn support educational efforts. The applicant also described how the partnership would build the capacity of staff, mainly in the school buildings that are Community Resource Schools.</p> <p>Competitive Preference Priority received an 8. The applicant proved that Community Resource Schools and the mentoring program are beneficial to students, parents and the community, within the schools that have access to this program. The applicant presented a plan to expand this program to four schools, but there was not a plan to scale it district-wide. The program and offerings are beneficial to the schools involved, and the applicant provided rationale for picking the schools that it did, but the applicant did not sufficiently prove that it would provide large-scale support.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: The applicant presented a coherent and comprehensive plan to build on the core educational assurance areas through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8+ year plan</li><li>• Monitoring of individual student plans by trained counselors</li><li>• 1:1 computing devices</li><li>• Providing opportunities for customizing preference, place, pace, and platform</li><li>• Focusing on Common Core standards for college and career-readiness</li><li>• Evidence-based Explorations to provide students opportunities to solve real world problems in real world ways</li><li>• Training teachers to plan lessons differently (Universal Design for Learning) and integrating technology to track students' progress and expand/customize the learning opportunities</li><li>• Allowing students to demonstrate mastery to progress—E-portfolios</li></ul>		
Total	210	151



Race to the Top - District  
Technical Review Form

Application #0478MD-3 for Baltimore City Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant states its vision is "to be a district where every parent wants to send their child because every school is a dynamic center of learning; all students learn to set and achieve short and long term goals for academic success; tools and supports are available to educators to help all children meet their personal goals; and all students are empowered to pursue the college and career of their choice".  To achieve its vision the applicant proposes the Personal Pathways Project designed to give student's input into their <i>preference</i> for content delivery, <i>place</i> where learning occurs, <i>pace</i> of the progression through content and <i>platform</i> to access anywhere, anytime learning resources. The Personal Pathways Project is focused on students in grade 6 -12 to create personalized learning environments where these students take control of their own learning; educators increase the relevance of instruction and schools extend the learning environment beyond the school walls.  The Personal Pathways Project has two goals: 1) Personal Literacy Instruction and 2) College and career readiness efforts to engage students in rigorous learning that promotes mastery of Common Core State Standards. The Project includes the integration of the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8+ year plan, beginning in the 6th grade to the first year of college, for every participating student,</li><li>• Enhanced Literacy Design Collaborative modules for ELA, Science and Social Studies content,</li><li>• Universal Design for Learning to emphasize personalized learning,</li><li>• Evidence-based Exploration projects,</li><li>• Technology Platform to support student's e-portfolios, facilitate blended learning and make possible real time data retrieval, and</li></ul>		

- Professional Development to build school level instructional capacity.

The proposal will leverage the following current and/or planned infrastructure:

- 16 School Support Networks led by a facilitator, including an academic content liaisons, student support liaison, data specialist, human capital specialist, community engagement and facilities specialist.
- School budget autonomy and Fair Student Funding - funds follow students.
- Family and student flexibility to choose the middle and high school to attend
- Enhanced family engagement strategies

Additionally, the applicant will build on the four core educational assurances through:

- Standards: Adoption of the Common Core State Standards in reading/ELA and Mathematics and new state curriculum beginning SY 2013-14 with an intense focus on literacy instruction in grades 6-12 infused into ELA, science and social studies,
- Assessment: Piloting the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers' (PARCC) computer-based assessment of CCSS in 2013 with full implementation in 2014; students in grades 6-9 will take the Reading Inventory and Scholastic Evaluation Assessment.
- College and Career Readiness: The implementation of career readiness and exploration guidelines through two initiatives - Career Technology Education (CTE) and Learning to Work (LTW) that includes career exploration, job shadowing, mentorships, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships and paid and non-paid internships,
- Data Systems: The use of the Data-Link to establish a warehouse of data and capacity to collect and track student and teacher data; the adoption of a technology platform that will accommodate a one stop data interface to view, analyze and download data to inform instructional decision-making,
- Effective Teachers and Principals: Leveraging the Career Pathways Models to improve practice and instructional effectiveness; a new evaluation process to identify teachers as Highly Effective, Effective, Developing or Ineffective based on achievement of student learning objectives (SLO's), student feedback and observations of the instructional framework,
- Turning Around Lowest Performing Schools: Promoting choice and options through its Expanding Great Options efforts to ensure all students attend a school that meets their unique needs and interest.

The applicant provides an extensive and comprehensive approach to its reform vision for a targeted group of students in grades 6 -12. It is noted by this reviewer that the applicant states a vision where *all* children in *all* schools experience a dynamic learning environment with the tools and resources necessary to achieve their goals. To this end, the applicant's data demonstrates steady progress over the past five years to improve student outcomes. However, this reviewer observes a disconnect between the applicant's stated vision and the decision to focus the reform proposal only on students in grades 6 -12. This is questioned in light of the persistently low proficiency scores for Black, Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners in grades 3 - 8 and the gaps in scales scores among the same group of students.

The applicant describes throughout the proposal its efforts to put into place the policies that balance school compliance and site based autonomy and the implementation of processes and structures that shift up to 80% of decision-making authority from the central office to the schools. The applicant's theory of change is driven by the persistent challenges of student's chronic absenteeism, the dropout rate, and slipping academic achievement and disengaged students. The reform agenda springboards from planned and in place mechanisms (policies, structures and process) underpinned by the four core assurance areas.

Given the applicant's current decentralized operations model and current student challenges it is not evident to this reviewer that the vision alone is sufficient and compelling enough to ensure the reform agenda will be adopted by all eligible schools. This reviewer questions the extent to which the applicant's ability to achieve the goals of the proposal will be impacted by the model of school autonomy and the speed at which each and every school buys into, adopts and funds the applicant's proposed plan. This concern is raised in light of a lack of overt evidence in the proposal of school leadership, teacher and parental support.

Finally, this reviewer is particularly concerned that the reform agenda does not specifically address the applicant's persistent achievement gaps or the teaching and learning reforms that will take place in the classroom. This concern is informed by two factors; 1) the applicant acknowledges that district operations are vastly different now than in the past five years, with one exception - instructional practice - the very practice that the applicant can only influence and not control; and 2) the applicant does not prescribe a specific reform to classrooms, schools and the district system, beyond those currently in place or in the pipeline designed to accelerate achievement, deepen student learning and increase equity based on student academic interests. The implementation of the applicant's plan depends on agreement and action by each individual school. This circumstance brings into focus the applicant's challenge to scale its proposed solution in a timely and effective way to affect whole system reform that will meet the needs, as stated in its vision, of *all* students.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (A)(2)  (a) In the proposal narrative the applicant describes a high decentralized district management and autonomous school decision making model. All eligible schools will be invited to participate and given the option to "opt-in". Based on the district's experience with past projects the applicant projects that of 137 eligible schools, 117 (85%) will elect to participate. The		



applicant indicates that schools leaders will be given a complete overview that includes the project description, goals, anticipated outcomes and requirements.

Schools that choose to opt in will be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding that describes expectations as well as the district funding that will be provided; provide projectors for each participating classroom and pay \$25/year for each participating student (from the school's Fair Student Funding allotment) for technology costs in phases II through IV of the project.

The district will provide the confirmed list of schools and students (a minimum of 25,001 students) within 100 days of notification of award.

(b) The district is not able at this time to provide a list of participating schools; the district provides a list of all eligible schools in appendix A2.1,

(c) The district anticipates that 35,000 students will participate; however, participation may range from 35,0001 - 41,000 students. The district provided estimates that 81.96% (28,686 students) will be from low-income families; 81.96% free and reduced meals and 93.05% non-white (30,800 students) are high need students; and 1,200 teachers in grades 6-12, including ELA, science and social studies teachers will participate.

Although the applicant expresses an expectation that 85% of eligible schools will choose to "opt in" , the absence of information about participating schools and participating students makes it a challenge to determine the extent to which the implementation of the reform proposal will support high quality LEA level and school level implementation. Also, it is not clear from the narrative specifically what it is that schools will be agreeing to when they choose to "opt in" and where the line of demarcation will occur between district authority to drive the proposed reform and school decision-making autonomy. This brings into question the degree of fidelity that will exist relative to the intended plan and each school's implementation of the proposed plan.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(3)

The applicant states that despite comprehensive systemic reform and improvements in student outcomes there are still persistent challenges with student engagement and dropouts and sufficient change has not occurred in school classrooms. The applicant's Logic Model to impact student outcomes is well developed and derived from the previously mentioned root cause challenges detailing a road map that is complete with descriptions of the social problems, student needs, desired inputs (the reform agenda), short-term outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes.

Additionally, the applicant has observed that since 2007 greater gains have been made in Mathematics than in English Language Arts. This information, coupled with an existing and successful implementation of the Mathematics Common Core State Standards and a realization that literacy skills are required for student success in all content areas, leads the applicant to focus its reform efforts on literacy focused personalized learning environments for students in grades 6 -12.

The applicant describes four phases of personalization for many of the elements of the project, noted in section (A)(2), except Professional Development. The applicant does make note that professional development will occur for school leaders, teachers and counselors. A detailed Gantt Chart (provided in the appendix) elaborates the elements of the plan and includes a description of activities, process owner and timeline (in quarterly increments) for implementation of Personal Pathways Project from 2013 – 2016.

The plan has all of the elements of a high quality plan; however, this reviewer observes an ambitiousness that may not be achievable and a cautionary note about efforts that may be functionally siloed, specifically as it relates to the simultaneous and overlapping plans for important areas such as –

- The exploration of research-based personalized learning and lessons from school pilots and the modification of the Literacy Design Collaborative and creation of the 8+ Year Plan;
- The pilot of the technology platform, the technical training for educators, the development of student e-portfolios and technology training for parents.

Of particular note in the detailed plan is the Counselor training. The applicant states that the Personal Pathways Project's most significant district-wide shift will occur for school counselors – the expectation for the role and accountability will be different – as will communications and work with students as well as using technology to work with students and parents. The mention of the school counselors role in the section of the application and references in the proposal about the counselor's responsibility for working with students to complete the 8+ year plan causes this reviewer to wonder about the lack of on-going professional development and support in the plan for this critical position.

Finally, although the applicant provides a plan for the expansion of the project to approximately 40,000 PreK-5th grade City Schools student from 2016 to 2018, there is no mention of a plan to scale to middle and high schools that do not choose to participate in the initial reform proposal.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(4)

The Personal Pathways Project is designed and intended to improve academic growth in ELA/reading and increase graduation rates and college enrollment rates for 6 to 12 grade students. The applicant states that goals have been established in alignment with School Board priorities and meet or exceed State Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) metrics, although there is no evidence of data in the proposal to support this assertion. The goals reflected for each target area appear to be those for all students and subgroups since participating schools/students are not yet determined.

(a) The applicant states in previous sections that the focus of the Personal Pathways project is improvements in ELA/reading and literacy integration across the content areas. For this reason this reviewer focused on the applicant's goals for Reading. The overall goal for summative assessments for Reading reflects a 2.8% increase for the grant period and for subgroups a range of 2% to 6% increase, with approximately 1% - 2% year over year improvements. The change in mean scales scores for the grades reported range from 4 – 7 point improvements. While proficiency is anticipated to increase within each subgroup the achievement gap between subgroups persists for all reported assessments. The goals seem achievable; however, given that the applicant is dedicating resources towards a specific focus on ELA/reading this reviewer does not find the goal ambitions consistent with the proposed effort and anticipated impact.

(b) The achievement gap for each subgroup is forecasted to decrease by 1% per year for each subgroup. The gaps among subgroups projected in this section, when compared to the achievement gaps among subgroups presented in (a) above, are inconsistent with one another.

(c) Graduation rates overall and for each subgroup are forecasted to increase by 6% during the term of the grant period from SY 2012 – 13 to SY 2015 – 16. It seems highly unlikely that all subgroups will respond in lock step given the achievement gaps previously noted. Also, dropout rates are stated by the applicant in the Logic Model and in previous sections as a persistent challenge to be solved and that the proposed project is specifically intended to address this issue, as result, this reviewer questions the ambitiousness of these goals.

(d) College enrollment is forecast to increase by 2% per year or 10% over the grant period. Again, it seems highly unlikely that all subgroups will improve in lock step. Overall, college enrollment is forecast to be at 56.7% at the end of the grant period. This goal seems to lack ambition, especially given the numerous letters of support in the appendix from colleges and universities.

The applicant does not provide in the narrative a rationale for the goals that are depicted; nor has the applicant provided a descriptive analysis to support the year over year increases for each of the goal areas. The absence of this information and any offered analysis to support it projection leads this reviewer to questions how each subgroup within each category will improve at the same pace given the baseline for each group and the inherent challenges being faced (as stated by the applicant) for some of the subgroups (black, ELL, FARM). This reviewer makes this observation about equity because the applicant's vision and reform plans do not specifically address targeted strategies to improve the performance of students in the lowest performing subgroups.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
(B)(1)		
The applicant provides SY 2007 - 2012 MSA Reading and Math scores and Achievement Gap data for Grades 3-8 (overall and by subgroup); Annual High School Assessment and High School Assessment Achievement Gap for Algebra 1 and English (overall and by subgroup); the Graduation Rate (based on the four year adjusted cohort rate) for 2010 – 2011 (overall and by subgroup); and the College Enrollment Rate (overall and by subgroup).		
(a) When SY 2007 and SY2012 scores are compared to each other the applicant results show a trend of improved proficiency overall and among subgroups and support its assertion of “unprecedented improvements”. However, a closer analysis of the results, particularly for Reading and Math for the years <i>between</i> SY 2007 – 12 suggests that the applicant has struggled to maintain student gains (in SY 2009 – 10) overall and for every subgroup (with the exception of non-FARM students). As a result the applicant has does not demonstrate a clear and consistent record of success.		
For the most part the applicant has demonstrated a record of success in decreasing the achievement gaps among subgroups in both reading and math, with the exception of students in the FARM subgroup where the gaps have widen.		
Proficiency gains for the High School Assessment for English and Algebra have declined overall and most subgroups with the exception of the ELL and SWD subgroups that have modest gains and persistently low proficiency scores.		
Graduation rates results for 2010 - 2011 for all students have increased by 4.34% points to 65.8%. Results for subgroups are mixed with the Asian PI, Hispanics, FARMS, ELL experiencing declines in graduation rates.		
College enrollments from 2007 - 2012 declined overall by 1.7% to 46.7%, as did rates for Black, female and male students.		
(b) It appears, based on the narrative that the applicant has committed to a targeted focus on its lowest performing schools; although this effort is in its infancy. The applicant states that it		

began partnering with the MSDE Breakthrough Center in 2010 to implement reforms among 18 of its lowest performing schools. The partnership brings to these schools comprehensive and systemic reform of its strategic plans, professional development, leadership capacity and curriculum; as well as a system of District and State financial and resource support. Although the applicant does not provide specific evidence for each school, it appears from the narrative that in three schools – Benjamin Franklin High School, Frederick Douglass High School and Commodore John Rodgers Elementary/Middle School – these reforms efforts are having a positive impact on student results – particularly in Algebra and math scores. Additionally, the applicant describes the reform effort as positively impacting other systemic factors such as school climate, truancy, attendance, teacher retention and family engagement.

(c) The applicant describes many different ways – technology based and via written documents - to make student data available. Of specific note are three means by which information and resources to support student learning are made readily available to parents, students and educators. Two technology based resources, Data Link and Parent Portal, connect parents, students, teachers and leaders to student data and support resources. These two secure platforms integrate data from multiple sources enabling teachers, students and parents to develop a real time understanding of student performance on state, local and diagnostic assessments and to assess their personal growth by comparing current and prior results. A third resource, The Family Menu, is a monthly newsletter sent to each student's home.

Use of the technology based support systems in on the rise. Logins to Data Link have increased from approximately 10,000 overall monthly logins to over 25,000 overall monthly logins during a six month period of time. Since 2010 parent account subscriptions to the Parent Portal have increased from 196 parents in 29 schools to 3,452 parents in 167 schools. The applicant attributes this increase to focused training for staff and an awareness campaign to promote the Data Link service to students.

The applicant is very transparent in its sharing of data and in its narratives. Based on this information this reviewer observes that the applicant has made improvements and gains in student outcomes over a five year period (with evidence of struggles to sustain improvements during this period) in almost all reporting areas; has taken steps to formalize its processes and structures to reform its lowest performing schools and has established a mechanisms, both technology based and through written communications, to give parents, students and educators tools to inform, support and improve student learning. The challenges to sustain student improvements during the course of the five years and the limited evidence of reform among all eighteen lowest performing schools weighs heavily in the rating.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
(B)(2)  The applicant makes available through schools and its own resources information to the public about its processes, practices, investments, initiatives, meetings, policies and budget matters. In addition, the applicant utilizes other resources such as the local newspaper, The Baltimore Sun and the federal government's Civil Rights Data Collection initiative (CRDC) to communicate actual district and school level expenditures. The Baltimore Sun reports the actual salaries of the applicant's educators through it public data base. This database, available since 2008, lists details such as name, date of hire, job description, base salary, supplemental pay and total earnings.  The applicant provides in Appendix B2.1 a sample of personnel salaries for school level instructional and support staff provided by schools. Actual personnel salary information is included in each school's budget, by job description. The applicant states that actual salaries for teachers, administrators, instructional and staff support and pupil staff support, as well as for non-instructional staff, are included and available via the district website and through each school's website. Additionally, actual non-personnel expenditures are also accessible through the applicant's and the CRDC websites.  The rating reflects the applicants evidence of transparency.		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
(B)(3)  The MSDE through the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) creates an environment and provides a broad legislative framework that gives sufficient autonomy governed by clear guidelines and standards to support the applicant's plans to implement the Personal Pathways structure for personalized learning. The COMAR (provided in the Appendix) defines for the applicant specific requirements for length of school year, enrollment, credit requirements and integration of UDL Guidelines and Principles. It also, at the same time, provides for many options to demonstrate mastery and earn credit, alternatives to 4-year enrollment requirements and alternatives for structuring programs.  Not only do the MSDE and COMAR regulations allow the applicant broad flexibility to implement the Personal Pathways project, more important, it lays a foundation for students experience the key elements of the Personal Pathways initiative by choosing their preference, place, pace and platform on their path toward promotion and graduation.  The State context for implementation of the Personal Pathways initiative as demonstrated by the MSDE and COMAR contribute to the rating.		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:		

(B)(4)

The applicant describes a six week, multi-method multi-source effort to share the applicant’s plan, garner support and gather feedback and otherwise engage internal and external stakeholders. It appears from the narrative the effort was designed to strike a balance between communicating the applicant’s prescribed intention for the Personal Pathways initiative and engaging the community and school interests and decision-making power. According to the applicant this effort included a broad array of stakeholders representing student, educator, community, government, parent, ethnic and special needs interests and included multiple forms of engagement including presentations, focus groups, public service announcements, listening session and communications via the applicant’s website.

The scope of the engagement included strategically targeted activities such as, three focus group sessions (held in schools that represent the schools and populations that Personal Pathways sought to engage); listening sessions with the PTA Leadership Council and Development Team, Teacher for America; meetings with Executive Board of the Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU), the Parent Community Advisory Board, the Special Education Citizen’s Advisory Board and the citywide Student Congress, among many other forms of engagement.

The many forms of input and feedback were integrated and resulted in feedback that served to inform the proposal. The feedback included – the need for a process for ongoing input from families and community partners; children need a say in their learning but must be held accountable to high standards; children need goals that motivate them to succeed; and children need new skills.

In light of many references made in the narrative, it is particularly curious to this reviewer the absence physical evidence, such as letters from school leaders and teachers, and the absence of parent letters of support included in the application. Also, there is no evidence of support from the State or local union representatives.

This is noted, in particular, because of the decision making authority bestowed upon schools and the option to “opt-in” to the Personal Pathways effort. It is also interesting to this reviewer that the applicant targeted specific schools for the focus groups because these schools “represent the schools and populations that Personal Pathways seeks to engage”. This is mentioned because the applicant’s vision is about *all* student’s success and limiting input from schools, their staff members and parents that do not seemingly fit the model (as is evidenced by student data) leaves out a very large group of constituents. To this reviewer an opportunity may have been missed to leverage an existing structure that is strategic to the Personal Pathway’s project – the School Support Networks – as a means to engage, seek input and promote the applicant’s project interests.

There is evidence of letters of support (using what appears to be a template) from Educator, Student and Parent Advisory Groups; the Business Community; Civil Rights Organizations; Advocacy Groups; Local Civic and Community-Based Organizations; Institutions of Higher Education/Teacher Preparation Providers and After Care Providers.

The offered rationale for school engagement and the absence of support from the most critical and significant stakeholders - school leaders, teachers, parents and students - contribute to the score.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(5)

The applicant’s analysis of needs and gaps has led to the identification of student and environmental factors. Student factors include: low attendance and chronic absence, disciplinary problems and an unacceptable drop out rate, disengaged students and stalling student achievement scores. Environmental factors include: policy, district construct, family and community engagement, curriculum, educator effectiveness and development and technological capability. These factors are reflected in the applicant’s logic model and are the driving force behind the focused effort that underpins the Personal Pathways Project.

The applicant provides a detailed table that lists the area of need, describes the applicant’s response and plans to the need and a specific location for the response within the proposal. Additionally, the applicant describes its intention to analyze the results of personalized learning strategies currently taking place in ten of its School Improvement Grant schools to identify the best practices. These best practices, it is stated, can inform the Personal Pathways project. The applicant offers a plan to support the goal to analyze and research best practices to inform the Personal Pathways implementation.

The applicant demonstrates evidence of a deep understanding of the underlying factors that contribute to its current needs and gaps and the logic behind its Personal Pathways initiative and includes this information in the high quality plan offered in the proposal.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(C)(1)</p> <p>(a) The applicant has laid out a high quality plan to implement the Personal Pathways initiative and the Preference, Place, Pace and Platform model to engage and encourage students to design personalized learning plans. This includes plans to execute and implement -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8+ year plan that begins in 6th grade and goes through the student's first year of college; working with counselors (and with the advice of parents and teachers) student's tailor the academic pathway to their interests and unique goals, included is the option to choose their middle and high school. An e-portfolio is developed to provide a platform to monitor progress to the plan.</li><li>• Modifications the Literacy Design Collaborative Modules to include student choice of readings, demonstration of mastery and guidelines for Personalization Projects.</li><li>• Development of Evidence-Based Exploration projects designed to engage students in deep learning projects in their area of academic interest. These projects allow students to build literacy skills in their content area of choice (science or social studies) and demonstrate mastery of CCSS.</li><li>• RFP for Computer Technology Platform to facilitate personalization in the classroom. The LDC and EBE modules will be adapted to the computer technology platform</li><li>• Development of additional internship opportunities to increase community engagement and alternative learning options for students</li><li>• Development of distance learning partnerships to enable students to build additional skills and gain knowledge in content not available through the district.</li><li>• Creation of e-portfolios to enable students to capture and report evidence of their mastery and to allow teachers and parents to have access to student work.</li><li>• Wireless internet connectivity in all participating schools to give students access to learning tools available through the internet.</li></ul> <p>The applicant has met the requirements of a high-quality plan for the information presented in the narrative and provide the required detail. It is important to note that the plan does not include how the applicant will ensure the program's fidelity and that all participating students experience the full breadth of the plan given that schools have autonomy over curricular matters. The structures described detail a comprehensive approach to the proposed Personal Pathways project and the applicant does provide examples of how a student may experience the learning environment. However, what is noticed by this reviewer is that most of what is described are the structures – the infrastructure - that will be put in place to support the proposed project. What is not evident to this reviewer is the “how” - the specific and recommended processes, content, methodologies and approaches - that will be put in place to cause the paradigm shift in thinking from an adult-centric model to student-centric system of action.</p> <p>It is not clear from the plan the extent to which the key elements of preference, place, pace and platform will be leveraged and driven by student needs and interests. It is not specifically evident in the narrative or in the plan the extent to which the elements of this plan represent a departure from the traditional school paradigm and how they will address the persistent issues presented in the Logic Model. As well, no specific mention, beyond the list in the narrative, is made to how learning constructs will be designed to enable students to develop traits such as goal setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communications, creativity and problem solving and to have exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives that motivate and deepen learning.</p> <p>Finally, and very importantly, strategies to address the interests of high needs students are not specifically detailed - this is a critical gap given the achievement gap noted in section (A)(4). Although the applicant has provided the required details for a high quality plan, the approach does not specifically address high needs students, nor does it clearly describe how parents will be and remain involved beyond the creation of the 8+ year plan and finally, it is not clear how instructional strategies will be specifically linked to student interests, needs and the underlying causes of student challenges. These are the factors that contribute to the score.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(C)(2)</p> <p>The applicant describes a multimodal approach to professional development for its teachers. What is not evidenced in the narrative is the efforts that will take place to develop school leadership capacity to lead and sustain the Personal Pathways reform initiative.</p> <p>The applicant indicates that the approach to teaching and learning will combine current structures with new structures to improve instruction and increase capacity to support personalized learning. The applicant's professional development strategy includes a focus on weekly professional cycles of learning, summer literacy academies, systemic professional development and other training opportunities. For the most part, professional development will be driven by the district and implemented and facilitated by a school based teacher leader who has built the skills of facilitation, leadership, technology and blended learning and personalized learning strategies.</p> <p>The applicant has predetermined a curriculum and annual focus for training content that is aligned and scaffolds in concert with the introduction of personalization strategies and complementary learning strategies from one year to the next.</p>		

Through the Professional Cycles of Learning sessions each participating school will work to ensure that teachers are provided weekly opportunities for collaboration to review student data (using the Reeves Data Driven Decision Making Model) and monitor student progress to college and career goals

The new evaluation system in every school is intended to improve teacher practice in two ways – 1) Student Learning Objectives (SLO's) used to measure student growth and 2) through observations using the Instructional Framework to give feedback. When implemented in SY 2013 -14 the applicant will depend upon these evaluations to identify Highly Effective, Effective, Developing and Ineffective teachers. Every school has the autonomy to ensure that leaders and teachers have the ability to structure an effective learning environment that meets the individual needs and accelerates student progress. With up to 80% of the budget within the control of the school, leaders can determine how best to invest funds to ensure the development and increased availability of highly effective and effective teachers in every classroom.

The applicant has stated in previous sections that one of the greatest challenges is instructional capacity. The introduction of the Personal Pathway model places greater and new demands on teachers and leaders to use technology to inform instruction and collaborate with students and parents, to redefine the teaching paradigm to create dynamic and student driven learning experiences and to integrate literacy content into social studies, science and math. The applicant provides a plan for professional development that introduces the Personal Pathways initiative in a linear manner introducing new elements of the model each year for four years. This would suggest that instructional staff will not be fully trained in the Personal Pathways model – preference, place, pace and platform – and able to fully support a student's personalize learning interests until 2016. This may be consistent with the plan to embed the necessary learning structures to support the Personal Pathways model; however, it is not sufficient to meet the needs of the current body of students who would benefit rom personalized learning environments now to be college and career ready.

It is curious to this reviewer that the applicant would not think about the professional development interests of staff in the same way it is thinking about addressing and impacting the personalized learning interests of students, and providing teaching and leadership staff the opportunities to determine learning preference, place, pace and platform. The absence of a planned alignment between the proposed approach for student learning and teacher learning could present challenges for both to realize the full potential of the Personal Pathway project.

The absence of professional development in the plan for the school leader is of concern to this reviewer, especially, because the professional development plan depends upon site based implementation and support of the district training curriculum. Finally, it is not evident from the narrative or in the plan, how the Personal Pathways model of instruction will be evidenced in each student's classroom, through student engagement and use of techology.

The professional timeline, the lack of precise professional development content and specific strategies to integrate and support college and career readiness and, especially, the lack of leadership development contribute to the applicants score.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
(D)(1)		
(a) The applicants describes a lean central office as a result of an initiative to shift autonomy and decision making to schools. The district staff works with schools through the district's 16 School Support Networks to have a deep quantitative and qualitative understanding of the each school, serve as an integrated team and single point of entry for school district support, respond efficiently and effectively to provide direct services to support school needs and build capacity and communicate the needs of school to the district office for better support.		
(b) Applicant schools are provided with flexibility and autonomy in their organizational and budget decision making. Schools must staff district required positions. The Fair Student Funding formula is used as the basis to fund schools and is based on the number of students and based on a per pupil allocations. Each school receives \$5,230 per student. Additional dollars are provided based on weighted factors such as academic need, students with disabilities and drop out prevention. Schools control 80% of their school budgets. Schools also have the authority to select the school calendar bell schedules from district approved options.		
(c) The COMAR regulations allow for students to demonstrate mastery and proficiency in ways other than seat time, course completion and behavioral indicators. The applicant describes a system that makes it possible for students to progress through their learning path based on their unique interests with options to demonstrate mastery and earn credits towards graduation and post graduate studies.		
(d) The applicant states that school allows students to re-attempt demonstrations of mastery in order to progress in a course. Schools allow retakes and ways to demonstrate mastery including journals and notebooks, applied experiences and projects, drills and contributions to the community. Also, school may create their own grading policies.		
(e) The applicant's narrative describes District Policy 110 - Programs for English Language Learning that mandates schools provide both communication and instructional support to non-English proficient students and their families. And supports for Students with Disabilities are also mandated that includes the creation of IEP's, parent communication and consent, placement, non-instructional services, data and procedural safeguards.		
The applicant's narrative provides evidence that meet the requirements of this criteria.		

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<div>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</div> <div>(D)(2)</div> <div>(a) The applicant has invested in technology upgrades in schools to ensure that all students and educators have access to classroom based technology and the resources needed for its effective use in the classroom. The applicant is committed to ensuring that all schools have the Internet and wireless connectivity and bandwidth to support digitally supported instructional strategies and data bases needed to effectively implement personal learning plans. Investments in professional development to upskill staff and students will be funded by State Race to the Top fund and will be the responsibility of participating schools. No mention made about availability being made to stakeholders beyond students and staff. This is a school based decision.</div> <div>(b) Technology support and resources for the Personal Pathways Project will occur in Phase II of the implementation plan. During this phase teachers in pilot schools will participate in professional development focused on integrating technology into instructional practices; school resources will provide on site support to teachers and opportunities for technical training will be provided during back to school nights and other parent events. Additional resources for support will include web-based guides and online screencasts.</div> <div>(c) Data link does not current allow students and parents to export student data. The applicant plans to ensure that this capability exists by Year 2 of the grant period.</div> <div>(d) The applicant has interoperable data systems for those listed with the exception of budget data.</div> <div>The applicant describes in the narrative its and schools efforts to embed the infrastructure to support personalized learning. With several exceptions (althoug planned), ensuring that all school stakeholders have access to technology resources; the current capacity for parents to export student data; and the absence from budget data linked to the interoperable systems, the applicant has meet this sections criteria.</div>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	14
<div>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</div> <div>(E)(1)</div> <div>A Governing Board and Advisory Board will be responsible for oversight of the project's continuous improvement. A third party evaluator will be contracted to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of investments being made through Race to the Top State funds. This evaluation will gather qualitative and quantitative information for professional development, technology and staff effectiveness in three levels of measure -<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• an implementation - study to provide immediate feedback on attainment of program specific goals,</li><li>• an efficiency study - to determine ways to improve operations, partnership and the use of tools and resources,</li><li>• an impact study - to examine and analyze initiative outcomes</li></ul></div> <div>Additionally, the evaluation will also focus on project schedule/timeline, budget and management/governance functions. Quarterly analysis of results will be conducted. Data will be desegregated by school, grade and student subgroups. Relevant findings will be shared with the School Support Networks to inform needed processes improvements. In addition the evaluation will focus on performance measures to determine whether their effectiveness as indicators and if necessary will make recommended changes to the performance measures being used.</div> <div>Quarterly reports will be provided and shared with the union, families and the communities through Internet resources such as Great Kids Up Close and Family Institute, through Education Channel 77 and through the Parent Portal. As well, information will be shared by schools through parent meetings and newsletters.</div> <div>The applicant's plans to de-centralize operations and increase school autonomy could add an inherent complexity to the continuous improvement process. This suggests to this reviewer (in the absence of explicit knowledge of the content of the Memorandum of Agreement for the "opt in" process and the degree of school autonomy that could exist) that the current plan may not address the level of school based flexibility and therefore would impact the elements of the project evaluation. This could make it necessary embed additional units of analysis and have interim continuous improvement cycles at the school and school support networks level to ensure the availability of accurate and timely information.</div> <div>The applicant offers a high quality plan that meets the needs of this sections criteria. The unknown aspects of the school based program flexibility contributes to the score.</div>		

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(2)</p> <p>The applicant's plan for ongoing communication and engagement with stakeholders includes the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• developing a clear message for each stakeholder group,</li><li>• identifying productive channel of communication appropriate for the audience,</li><li>• hiring a Personal Pathways Project Manager</li><li>• engagement of the Office of Family and Community Engagement to establish partnership among the community and schools,</li><li>• convening of an Advisory Council comprised on internal and external stakeholders,The applicant's high quality plan.</li></ul> <p>The applicant provides a high quality plan with two goals: 1) Effectively communicate project details to all stakeholders, and 2) Elicit on-going stakeholder engagement. These goals are supported by activities, rationale, deliverables, timeline and responsible party and are included in the Gantt Chart provided in the Appendix.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(3)</p> <p>The applicant describes that great thought was given to the identification of the performance measures used to guide the implementation and evaluation of the Personal Pathways project. Mechanisms are in place for the Governing Board, Advisory Committee and School Support Network members to review and respond to quarterly School Indicator Reports. In addition to the required performance measures the applicant proposes to also measure daily average attendance for students in Grades 6-12, the percentage of chronically absent students (more than 10% of of school time), the number of college bearing courses passed during high school, the number of students participating in paid or unpaid work-learning experiences, the percentage of graduates enrolled in 2-year college by fall after graduation and the percentage of graduates enrolling in a 4 year college by fall after graduation. Additionally, the applicant identifies performance indicators for the school climate survey and FAFSA.</p> <p>The applicant provides a description of the rationale, how the measure informs the plan and theory of action and the review and improvement process for each performance measure. Although the applicant cannot at this time provide specific details about participating schools and students, the applicant does provide indicators for each of the performance measures.</p> <p>What is notable about the applicant's choice of performance measures is that they go beyond traditional measures of academic achievement and are strongly linked to the Logic Model - the underlying challenges and the root causes of negative and non productive student outcomes.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(4)</p> <p>The applicant presents a high quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top - District funded activities. In addition to the evaluation framework previously mentioned in section (E)(1), the applicant intends to use the Logic Model to conduct a student impact study and educator impact study to assess the projects impact on student achievement, engagement and educator effectiveness.</p> <p>In addition the applicant intends to further the evaluation of the impact of the investment by conducting an analysis of the expenditures relative to student outcomes and the perceived value by students of the Personal Pathways project. An efficiency study will also be designed to determine ways that the applicant can make more efficient use of the investment to improve the use of technology . To accomplish this end the applicant plans to leverage its participation in the Building a Teaching Effectiveness Network (BTEN) project with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to conduct an efficiency study to examine ways in which technology is used for personalized learning, strength of community partnerships, staff and salary structures and high quality teacher development, instructional strategies, school schedules and processes for decision making.</p> <p>The applicant details a high quality plan focused on two goals: 1) Utilize a comprehensive body of data to evaluate success of project initiatives and efficiency of use of resources, and 2) Use finding to improve efficiency. The plan details activities, rationale, deliverables, timeline and responsible parties.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)



	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<div>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</div> <div>(F)(1)</div> <div>(a) The total budget for the Personal Pathways Project is \$67,385,490; \$39,914,490 is the Race to the Top grant request amount and \$27,471,000 are funds from other sources. The applicant has divided the Personal Pathways Project budget into 10 projects for purposes of understanding its budget:<div><div>1. Content development - \$1,460,242</div><div>2. Professional development - \$8,627,290</div><div>3. Technology - \$19,257,168</div><div>4. Internships - \$3,463,348</div><div>5. College and Career Planning - \$1,693,342</div><div>6. Data Integration - \$1,191,400</div><div>7. Community Schools - \$2,072,000</div><div>8. Project Evaluation - \$414,400</div><div>9. Project Management - \$699,300</div><div>10. Engagement - \$1,036,000</div></div><div>Applicant provides a detailed description for each element of the budget for this project. Throughout the proposal the applicant speaks to the significance of technology based applications and the need to increase the capacity of instructional staff. The budget bears out these intentions to invest in technology and professional development as major elements of the budget allocation.</div><div>(b) The budget appears reasonable and sufficient to support the applicant's proposal, with one exception. Systemic reform is typically human capital intensive. The driving mechanisms for the reform described in the applicant's proposal depends upon new ways to leverage existing resources as well as the development of new tools and resources. The applicant's budget allocates funds for six district staff members that will be responsible for the design, development, customization of current or planned curriculum, professional development, technology, internships and college and career readiness tools and resources. This number of resources for the most critical aspects of the Personal Pathways strategies (even with the support of contracted services) does not seem adequate to create, in a timely manner, the tools and resources needed to take the scale in over 137 schools the reform that will be necessary to achieve its goals. Of note, is that some of the resources mentioned are identified as one time expenses leaving this reviewer wondering about how and who will continue to provide needed support. Unless these resources are in addition to already employed resources that will support the aforementioned strategies, this reviewer questions whether the district's de-centralized approach and desire to limit district office staffing will hamper not accelerate the reform agenda.</div><div>(c) The applicant provides, for each element of the project a line item budget that mirrors the overall budget, including a narrative, rationale for the expenditure, a description of the cost, cost assumption and total for each year and aggregate total for four years. The applicant includes within each project level budget annotation of one time investments.</div></div>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
<div>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</div> <div>(F)(2)</div> <div>The applicant's budget includes investments that will establish learning environments for the long term and embed the technology and instructional infrastructure needed to sustain the Personal Pathways Project beyond the 4 year grant period. Investments made in the technology platform, LDC curriculum models, 8+ Year Plan, professional development and other instructional supports will be useful and available to students and staff beyond the grant period.</div> <div>Within the proposal there are also mechanisms in place (e.g.. school's annual contribution to fund technology at \$25/student and study to repurpose current spending) to ensure that the project is sustained beyond the grant period. To ensure that all elements of the project including funding and engagement make it possible to sustain the project beyond the grant period the Applicant defined a high quality plan focused on the following goals:</div> <div><div>Goal 1: Ensure the financial stability of the Personal Pathways initiative.</div><div>Goal 2: Create community buy-in and commitment of supportive resources for the Personal Pathways initiative by local and state elected officials.</div></div> <div>The goals are supported by activities to create a sustainability plan; coordinate communication on potential funding opportunities; provide ongoing communication with local and state elected officials on the progress of the Personal Pathways initiative.</div> <div>The applicant plans to put organizational and governance infrastructures, such as an RTT-D Governing Board and Grants Manager in place to ensure the projects sustainability by seeking</div>		

additional grants funding, seeking efficiencies in current processes, repurposing existing dollars and seeking innovations that align with mobility enabled hardware and content. Additionally, the applicant describes a focus on the development of external relationships to ensure the continued financial and resources support for the Personal Pathways project. Keeping the city and state governments involved and informed and engaging a think tank of practitioners are strategies being planned to ensure the sustainability and continued improvement of the project.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:		
(1)		
<p>The applicant presents a case about the issue of chronic absence among the 6-12 grade bands as a significant barrier to student success that could undermine the Personal Pathways Project. The Personal Pathways Project, to be successful requires that students are engaged and regularly participate in their personalized learning plans. As evidenced by the student achievement data, many of those students and families that would be served by the project face daily challenges that hamper the ability to attend school on a regular basis.</p> <p>To address this issue the Applicant outlines a plan to expand the existing partnership with the Family League of Baltimore (FLBC) to provide an integrated array of wrap around services to students and their families in four additional high schools who are chronically absent, or on the brink of being so, as well as improving attendance for all students. The addition of these four high schools brings the total number of secondary Community Resource schools to 31. The applicant describes an in-depth description of each element of the project that includes staff a site coordinator, mentoring programs, a Wraparound Coordinator, engaging school counselors and training for family and community engagement specialists to support students and schools through the School Support Network. Additionally, the applicant intends to leverage elements of the Personal Pathways project, such as the 8+ Year Plan to reconnect at risk students to schools.</p>		
(2)		
<p>The applicant has identified eight performance measures spanning grades 6-12 that focus on educational, family and community outcomes. These performance measures focus on the problems identified in the Logic Model and spring board from the performance measures identified as important the the Personal Pathways initiative. Five of the performance measures are educational in nature and three are focused on family and community. The indicators includes measures of a focus on ninth grade attainment, graduation rate, attendance, chronic absence, climate survey of student who "like" their school, how "safe" students feel at school and school suspensions.</p> <p>(3)(a) The district's Office of Achievement and Accountability currently tracks the proposed indicators.</p> <p>(3)(b) The partnership has a plan to use the data on a weekly basis to monitor student attendance, get support to students with attendance challenges, work with children at risk (missing 10% of days on a roll per month), identify the causes of chronic absence and provide family support.</p> <p>(3)(c) The plan to scale the project to additional schools includes training all middle and high school counselors to recognize at risk student and to connect students to necessary supports. This project will be linked to the Personal Pathways initiative and the district will work with FLBC to identify strategies for offer services to new schools at a reasonable and sustainable cost.</p>		
(4)		
<p>The FLBC programs are designed to integrate education and other services into its services delivery model and include programs to integrate academics, enrichment, and health and social supports. Intense mentoring provides behavioral and social/emotional support. Additionally, counselors will integrate FLBC service strategies into a student's 8+ year plan.</p>		
(5)		
<p>The applicant describes mechanisms and processes in place to build staff capacity using a combination of district embedded resources and FLBC resources to assess needs and assets of students through data informed decision making; using community indicators and school leadership frameworks to identify and inventory needs and assets of school and community; using the Youth Program Quality Assessment to evaluate the quality of youth programs; using an advisory board with oversight and input into school processes and engaging parents and families through the school's School Family Council. Each of the domains informs the applicant's progress.</p>		
(6)		
<p>The applicant has identified performance measures, as previously noted, for students in grades 6-12 and has identified performance targets for each performance measure for each year of the grant period. It is not clear to this reviewer that these targets are meant for a specific group of students since the four participating schools and participating groups of students are not yet identified. Without this information it is difficult to determine whether the goals are achievable and ambitious.</p> <p>The applicants describes a comprehensive approach to leverage an existing and long term partnership with the FLBC organization currently working in its schools. The approach is</p>		

supported by a high quality plan and the requirements of the Competitive Preference Priority. This reviewers makes only one cautionary observation. That is the reference to enlisting the support of school counselors to identify at risk students. The school counselor, as previously mentioned in the proposal and observed by this reviewer, will experience significant changes in their role and responsibility. It is unknown at this time how many students each counselor will be responsible for shepherding and this reviewer cautions over extending the counselors efforts beyond the ability to achieve the goals of the Personal Pathways initiative.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has throughout this grant proposal demonstrated a methodical intention to reform its schools and classrooms by building upon its current work to comply with the four core assurance areas. The applicant's Logic Model provides a substantive basis to understand the challenges and needs the applicant's students; as well the Logic Model serves to as a roadmap for a path to reform schools and classrooms to achieve short, intermediate and long term goals. The Personal Pathways initiative, a critical aspect of the Logic Model and ultimately the foundational aspects of the theory of change, offers the district, schools and community stakeholders and opportunity to personalize all elements of the learning experience through the portal of his/her 8+ Year Plan. To achieve this intention the applicant describes a high quality plan, supported by a detailed budget to reform and/or introduce school and classroom practices that will personalize learning for all students.</p> <p>The applicant has crafted a thoughtful plan and has over the past several years demonstrated through it reform efforts the commitment to challenge existing tradition to move students in the direction of improved achievement. The persistent achievement gap is troublesome, especially since there are not specific strategies detailed within the application to target the needs of specific student subgroups. Some organizational practices may inhibit the speed at which the reform efforts are achieved. School autonomy and decision making could leave some student out of the project, ensuring teacher and leader effectiveness may require more resources than planned and the projected ratio of district resources to provide the tools and resources needed to drive systemic change could prove challenging.</p> <p>Even with these cautionary observations the applicant has presented a comprehensive intention to create personalized learning classrooms to shift the focus of preference, place, pace and platform from teacher directed to student directed to support student's efforts to graduate college and career ready.</p>		
Total	210	167